

## Message Text

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S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 285795

NODIS

CHEROKEE, FOR THE AMBASSADOR

FOLLOWING REPEAT GENEVA 9243 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 19 NOV 76.

QTE: S E C R E T GENEVA 9243

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM REINHARDT

DEPT PASS LONDON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 19 MEETING WITH RICHARD

1. I CALLED ON IVOR RICHARD THIS MORNING. HE WAS  
ACCOMPANIED BY TONY DUFF AND DENNIS GRENNAN.

2. RICHARD REVIEWED FOR ME THE STATE OF PLAY. HE  
RECALLED THAT WHEN NKOMO AND MUGABE MET YESTERDAY,  
NKOMO HAD ASKED WHEN RICHARD WOULD CALL A PLENARY  
SESSION. RICHARDS HAS SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED INFORMALLY THAT  
NKOMO TOLD HIS DELEGATION HE WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT  
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THE LATEST BRITISH PAPER AND WOULD SEEK TO CONVINCE  
MUGABE. NKOMO AND MUGABE MET FOR THREE HOURS YESTERDAY  
AFTERNOON AND ARE MEETING THIS MORNING. IN THE  
MEANTIME, MEMBERS OF NKOMO'S DELEGATION ARE BUSY AT

WORK ON A PAPER WHICH WILL SET FORTH THEIR IDEAS  
ON THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

3. IT IS NOT CLAR, HOWEVER, HOW THE SITUATION WILL  
TURN OUT. THE BRITISH UNDERSTAND THAT CHISSANO AND  
THE ANGOLAN FOREIGN MINISTER, EDUARDO DOS SANTOS,  
HAVE BEEN URGING MUGABE TO STAND FIRM AND REJECT  
THE LATEST BRITISH POSITION. CHISSANO AND DOS  
SANTOS HAVE AVOIDED CONTACT WITH THE BRITISH DELEGATION.  
I HAVE ASKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH CHISSANO AND  
THE MOZAMBICANS AND THE MOZAMBICANS HAVE ELUDED  
ME. RICHARD ALSO TOLD ME THAT MUZOREWA WAS  
DEEPLY UNHAPPY OVER THE LATEST BRITISH POSITION  
WHICH HE SEES TO BE A FURTHER SURRENDER TO THE  
PATRIOTIC FRONT.

4. PICKING UP THIS THEME, AND REFERRING TO  
OUR CONVERSATION YESTERDAY, TONY DUFF EMPHASIZED HOW  
AWKWARD THE BRITISH POSITION IS. THEY HAVE BEEN IN  
CONSULTATION WITH LONDON AND HAVE MET AMONG THEMSELVES TO  
DECIDE WHAT STEPS THEY SHOULD TAKE IN THE EVENT THAT THE  
PATRIOTIC FRONT REJECTS THE LATEST BRITISH  
STATEMENT ON A CLOSING DATE FOR THE CONFERENCE,  
OR IF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SIMPLY DELAYS RESOLUTION OF  
THE ISSUE AND CALLS FOR FURTHER BRITISH CONCESSIONS.  
DUFF INDICATED THAT, FACED WITH THE REJECTION OR THE  
THREAT OF FURTHER INCONCLUSIVE CONSULTATION, THE BRITISH  
WERE DISPOSED TO SEEK AN ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE. HE  
DID NOT SEE HOW BRITAIN COULD ARGUE THE INDEPENDENCE  
DATE ISSUE FURTHER WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT,  
WHILE AT THE SAME TIME DISCUSSING INTERIM GOVERNMENT  
WITH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE. (SITHOLE LEFT TOWN ON  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, FOR AN UNDISCLOSED DESTINATION.  
THE BRITISH HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT HE MAY HAVE  
GONE TO MAPUTO.)

5. DUFF ARGUED THAT IF THE BRITISH PURSUE THE INTERIM  
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GOVERNMENT TALKS WITH SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA AND THE  
PATRIOTIC FRONT REJECTED CONSULTATIONS ON THIS ISSUE,  
THE BRITISH COULD FIND THEMSELVES IN THE UNENVIABLE  
POSITION OF HAVING REACHED AN AGREEMENT ON THE INTERIM  
GOVERNMENT WITH SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA AND NOT WITH THE  
PATRIOTIC FRONT. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, BACKED BY THE  
FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS, WOULD REJECT THE CONCLUSIONS AND  
THE BRITISH WOULD HAVE "FATHERED A CHILD THAT THEY COULD  
NOT PROTECT." FOR THIS REASON, DUFF FELT, IT WOULD BE SAFER  
TO ADJOURN.

6. I WAS STRUCK BY HOW FAR BRITISH THINKING ON ADJOURNMENT  
HAS PROCEEDED. NOTHING, OF COURSE, WILL BE DONE

IF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ACCEPTS THE LATEST BRITISH POSITION. RICHARD IS RETURNING TO LONDON ON SATURDAY OR SUNDAY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS REGULAR BIWEEKLY MEETINGS WITH CROSLAND. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY HE WILL SEE CALLAGHAN AS WELL AS OTHER LABOR MINISTERS. I WEIGHED IN STRONGLY AND SPELLED OUT THE ADVANTAGES WE SAW IN A SHORT RECESS WHICH WOULD PRESERVE THE GENEVA OPTION. I TOLD RICHARD THAT IT WOULD BE HARD TO PUT ANYTHING BACK TOGETHER IF WE BROKE NOW. EVEN IF DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE AT TECHNICAL LEVELS, THEREBY GIVING THE BRITISH AND OURSELVES TIME TO DEVELOP A NEW APPROACH WITH THE AFRICANS, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE THE GENEVA VENUE.

7. DUFF PRESSED HIS ARGUMENT AND SAID THAT GIVEN THE PROSPECTS OF DISAGREEMENT OVER AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO ADJOURN AND RENEGOTIATE A PACKAGE DEAL BEFORE MEETING AGAIN IN GENEVA OR ELSEWHERE. DUFF GAVE NO INDICATION HE HAD ANY IDEA WHAT THAT PACKAGE WOULD BE. RICHARD, WHO HAD LISTENED CAREFULLY TO DUFF'S AND MY ARGUMENTS, CAME DOWN ON MY SIDE AND SAID THAT HE SAW AN ADVANTAGE IN A SHORT FIXED RECESS OF A WEEK TO TEN DAYS IN WHICH NEW CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN LONDON, WASHINGTON AND THE FRONT LINE STATES, AS WELL AS SALISBURY AND PRETORIA, COULD TAKE PLACE. HE ASKED THAT WE NOT RULE OUT THE EVENTUAL POSSIBILITY OF A FULL-FLEDGED ADJOURNMENT. I SUGGESTED WE NOT PREJUDGE THE OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS DURING A BRIEF RECESS. RICHARD AGREED.

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8. THE BRITISH HAVE NOT BEEN IN CONTACT WITH NYERERE, WHO THEY UNDERSTAND IS STILL IN NORTHERN NIGERIA. CROSSLAND IS WRITING OBSANJO BUT WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE IS SAYING. RICHARD AND HIS ADVISERS ARE UNITED IN THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT WITH NYERERE'S CHANGE OF POSITION WHICH RICHARD QUALIFIED AS POSSIBLY "MALICIOUS". HE FEELS SURE THAT NYERERE UNDERSTANDS THE PARLIAMENTARY IMPOSSIBILITY OF PASSING AN INDEPENDENCE LAW IF ELECTIONS HAVE NOT TAKEN PLACE IN RHODESIA.

9. I REVIEWED MY CONSULTATIONS WITH THE OBSERVERS WITH RICHARD AND TOLD HIM HOW FAR APART I FELT NATIONALIST AND RHODESIAN THINKING IS. RICHARD SAID THAT HIS ADVANCE INDICATION OF WHAT NKOMO HAS IN MIND LEAD HIM TO THE SAME CONCLUSION. APPARENTLY NKOMO'S DELEGATION IS WORKING ON A ONE TIER SOLUTION. THE CABINET WOULD HAVE 25 PORTFOLIOS, 5 WOULD GO TO NON-RHODESIAN FRONT EUROPEANS AND 20 WOULD GO TO "PARTIOTS". MUZOREWA'S AND SITHOLE'S MEN WOULD BE SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED.

10. COMMENT: I HAD NOT FULLY APPRECIATED YESTERDAY

HOW RAPIDLY THE BRITISH THINKING ON ADJOURNMENT WAS EVOLVING. I BELIEVE OUR CONVERSATION THIS MORNING CONVINCED RICHARD THAT A RECESS AS OPPOSED TO AN ADJOURNMENT IS A PREFERRED INTERMEDIATE COURSE OF ACTION. I WAS NOT IMPRESSED BY THE STATE OF BRITISH THINKING ON HOW THEY WOULD POSSIBLY RECONSTITUTE A NEGOTIATING FORUM IF GENEVA COLLAPSED. RICHARD AND HIS COLLEAGUES SEEM TO BE THINKING MORE IN TACTICAL THAN IN STRATEGIC TERMS. THEY HAVE NOT CONSIDERED HOW DIFFICULT IT WILL BE TO GET NYERERE TO BACK AWAY FROM HIS PRESENT POSITION OR TO OBTAIN A FRONT LINE CONSENSUS ON THE SHAPE OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THE BRITISH HAVE GIVEN NO FURTHER THOUGHT TO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN SALISBURY AND PRETORIA, BEYOND SAYING THEY WOULD LEAVE THAT QUESTION TO US. RICHARD IS NOT PANICKY BUT WE SHOULD KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON THIS ISSUE AND THE RESULTS OF RICHARD'S CONSULTATIONS IN LONDON.

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11. AT THE SAME TIME, MY DISCUSSIONS IN GENEVA HAVE CONVINCED ME THAT THE BRITISH COULD NOT HAVE DUCKED A DEBATE ON THE INDEPENDENCE DATE. MY MEETINGS WITH THE NATIONALISTS AND THE FRONT LINE OBSERVERS LEAD ME TO CONCLUDE THAT WHEN THE NATIONALISTS ARRIVED IN GENEVA THEY WERE NOT CONVINCED SMITH WAS PREPARED TO SETTLE AND WISHED TO DRIVE AT AN EARLY DATE FOR A CONVINCING, SYMBOLIC GESTURE. THIS NATIONALIST PREDISPOSITION WAS STRONGLY REINFORCED BY MUGABE'S GUERRILLA SUBORDINATES WHO ARE IMBUED WITH THE HEROICS OF ARMED STRUGGLE AND WISH TO SEE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER AS OPPOSED TO A NEGOTIATED SHARING OF POWER. THE NATIONALISTS' INCLINATION WAS REINFORCED BY THE FRONT LINE OBSERVERS. CHONA WHO, ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH, THROUGH THE COURSE OF THE LAST WEEKS SEEMS TO HAVE EXCEEDED KAUNDA'S INSTRUCTIONS AND ADOPTED A HARDER LINE THAN HIS PRESIDENT MAY HAVE DIRECTED, WAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF ORGANIZING THE NATIONALISTS TO PRESS THE BRITISH AND SMITH FOR A FIRM DATE OF INDEPENDENCE. ONCE SURFACED, THE ISSUE OF THE DATE WOULD SIMPLY NOT GO AWAY.

12. SMITH, AFTER BICKERING A BIT OVER THE LENGTH OF THE INDEPENDENCE PROCESSES, HAS NEVER BEEN A PROBLEM. HE SHREWDLY LET THE QUESTION TURN INTO A NATIONALIST-BRITISH CONFRONTATION.

13. THE BRITISH HAVE TRIED THROUGHOUT THE DEBATE TO SET THE ISSUE ASIDE AND DEVELOP A COMPROMISE FORMULA WHICH WOULD LEAVE THE QUESTION OF A DATE OPEN UNTIL THE END OF THE CONFERENCE - THEREBY PROCEEDING TO THE TOUGHER AND MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF A TRANSFER OF

POWER. THE INDEPENDENCE DATE QUESTION BECAME FOR THE  
PATRIOTIC FRONT A "WE WIN - YOU LOSE ISSUE" AND THE  
FRONT'S UNWILLINGNESS TO MOVE ON UNTIL "VICTORY" WAS  
AT HAND, HAS BLOCKED EVERY BRITISH ATTEMPT TO EVADE  
A DEFINITIVE RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTION. FACED  
WITH NATIONALIST INTRANSIGENCE, RICHARD'S ATTEMPTS  
TO OFFER REASONABLE AVENUES OF ESCAPE TO THE PATRIOTIC  
FRONT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME STANDING FIRM ON A  
PRINCIPLE, WERE, IN MY JUDGMENT, THE ONLY TACTICS HE  
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COULD PURSUE.

14. IT IS NOT CLEAR, EVEN TODAY, THAT NKOMO AND  
MUGABE WILL ACCEPT BRITISH ADVICE AND BE ABLE TO AGREE  
TO BACK OFF, RESERVE THEIR POSITIONS, AND  
PROCEED ON TO A DISCUSSION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.  
THE COST OF THE DEBATE HAS BEEN HIGH. THE  
SUSPICIONS OF THE "WILD MEN" ARE AS GREAT AS EVER  
AND DIVISIONS AMONG THE ZIMBABWEANS ARE DEEPER.  
MUZOREWA'S PRIVATE EXPRESSIONS OF UNHAPPINESS TO  
THE BRITISH HAVE TAKEN PUBLIC FORM IN PRESS STATEMENTS  
ATTACKING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. THE SMALL STORE  
OF GOODWILL AND NATIONALIST UNITY WHICH SEEMED TO BE  
DEVELOPING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFERENCE IS  
DISAPPEARING.ABRAMS  
UNQTE: KISSINGER

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